

Africa vol. 1.

AN
EXCURSION
TO THE
PEAK OF TENERIFFE.



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AN
EXCURSION
TO THE
PEAK OF TENERIFFE,

In 1791 ;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A LETTER

TO

JOSEPH JEKYLL, Esq. M.P. F.R.S. F.S.A.

FROM

LIEUTENANT RYE,

Of the Royal Navy.

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1793.



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AN
EXCURSION
TO THE
PEAK OF TENERIFFE.

THE Pike, or, as it is usually termed, the Peak of Teneriffe, involves a multitude of objects, interesting to the Philosopher, and abundantly entertaining to the curious of all denominations.—We consequently find, that various efforts have been made to ascertain the height of this stupendous work of Nature, to explore its environs, to examine its natural productions, and to give such general information concerning it, as was certain of being favourably received by the Public. Few, however, of such undertakings, have proved successful; and indeed, it is sufficiently notorious, that of the various multitudes who have visited the Canary Islands, a very small proportion have gained the summit of Teneriffe.

The writer of the present account, is not induced by motives of vanity, to communicate his successful accomplishment of an undertaking, in which many individuals, superior to himself in talents and experience, have failed. But he thinks it highly becomes every man, to add his mite to the stock of general knowledge ; and he has sufficient reason to believe, that the trifling hints of obscure and less informed persons, have often opened the way to the most useful and important discoveries. If, therefore, he shall have occasion to observe, that what is related in the following pages may tend to make smoother a path hitherto surrounded with difficulties, to which many have yielded, he shall be justified to himself for making that public, which at first was merely intended for the solitary amusement of a friend. Perhaps it would still have remained among the papers of that friend, forgotten alike by the Author and him to whom it was addressed, but for a paragraph which recently made its appearance in the public Newspapers.—The Embassy to China, is deservedly an object of attention with all those, to whom the character, the commerce, and the science of their country is dear. It is no wonder, therefore, that a kind of solicitous anxiety accompanies the individuals engaged in this expedition, particularly as the more distinguished characters among them, are eminent alike for their talents and their virtues, for their love of science, and for their ardent desire to extend and improve this inexhaustible source of ingenuous amusement. I had read, that Sir George

Staunton,

Staunton, who attends Lord Macartney in the quality of Secretary, and whose scientific attainments are in high estimation in this and other Countries, had made an unsuccessful attempt to gain the summit of Teneriffe. This, as may easily be supposed, brought to my mind a scene, which had recently afforded me matter of great exultation and some triumph :—For in defiance of the expostulations of the Natives, and the seeming impediments in my way, I had, at no great distance of time overcome, what multitudes, as well as Sir George Staunton, had found invincible.—I thought, therefore, a plain simple Narrative might not be unacceptable. I made no Philosophical Experiments, for if I had possessed the requisite ability, I was destitute of the means : I made indeed but few observations of any kind, for neither my time nor my circumstances would admit of this ; but I pursued my object successfully to its end, and perhaps the description of my Journey may entertain some, and prove eventually useful to others.

The Canaries were once called the Fortunate Islands, and if the rich wines, and other articles of luxury and delight which they produce, were alone to be considered, they might well seem to deserve the name. But all these Islands, and that of Teneriffe in particular, are subject to frequent Earthquakes and to dreadful Volcanos, which pour forth torrents of flaming sulphur. These calamities must necessarily inspire constant alarms and apprehensions. The eye of philosophy and reason will
readily

readily deduce from them an argument, in favour of the impartiality of Providence.

The Canaries are, as is well known, seven in number:—They are placed between 12 and 21 degrees of W. Longitude, and between 27 and 29 degrees of N. Latitude, in the Atlantic Ocean. Teneriffe is one of the largest of these Islands,—Its particular situation is W. Longitude 17. Latitude 28, and about 350 miles West of Morocco, in Africa.

On Saturday, April 16th, 1791, at half past One, P. M. the Gorgon, commanded by Captain Parker, and bound to New South Wales, anchored in Santa Cruz Bay. The ship was warped close in, and moored with the small bower and stream. The Master of the Port immediately came on board in the Quarantine boat, attended by such Officers as were necessary.—At three o'clock, the second Lieutenant was sent on shore, to inform his Excellency the Governor, that the Gorgon had put into the Port of Santa Cruz for refreshments. He was at the same time to request a supply of such other articles of accommodation, as our exigencies might require, and to inform the Governor, that we were willing to salute the Garrison, if they would consent to return gun for gun. He was further to signify the Captain's intention of waiting upon his Excellency, accompanied by Lieutenant-Governor King, and by his other Officers. This gentleman, in the course of an hour, returned with
the

the Governor's permission to purchase whatever we might want. Soon afterwards, his Excellency's Aid-de-Camp came with a message to the following effect :—That he had strict orders from his Court, never to return the salutes of Foreign ships of War; but he politely congratulated us on our arrival, and invited the Officers to dine with him on the following day. The invitation was accepted, and Captain Parker, Governor King, with such Officers as could be spared from the ship, waited the next day upon his Excellency, who received them with many obliging marks of civility and attention. The name of this gentleman was Don Antonio de Gutieres, he had been Governor either of Minorca or Majorca, and was just arrived at the Island. The former Governor, whom this came to supersede, and who was going home in the first Spanish Packet, was also one of the company.

Immediately on my arrival, I applied for, and obtained leave of absence, for the express purpose of visiting the Peak. In the mean time, not only the Governor, but also many of the other Inhabitants had informed Captain Parker, that this season of the year was unfavourable to such an undertaking, and that the intense cold had destroyed all who made the attempt, under circumstances like my own. I was in consequence sent for by the Captain, who at first desired me to give up all thoughts of such an excursion; but when I assured him of my

determination to run no improper risks, he kindly consented that I should at least attempt the accomplishment of my purpose.

I was accompanied on shore by Mr. Burton, the Botanist, who was sent out at the suggestion of Sir Joseph Banks for the particular purpose of promoting botanical knowledge at New South Wales. From nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, we were detained by a difficulty we had neither of us foreseen; no guides or mules were to be procured to go with us to the Peak. We accordingly yielded to necessity, and engaged them to carry us to the town of Oratava, from which place it seemed by no means improbable that we should be obliged to proceed on foot. The road from Santa Cruz to Oratava is extremely rugged, but for this inconvenience ample compensation was made by the beauties which on each side surrounded us, and the whole was intermingled by striking proofs of those great convulsions of Nature, which have here taken place. Sometimes we rose into the clouds, and were lost in thick mists; at others we descended into deep vallies, or, more properly speaking, vast chasms, for in various places the Island seemed as if rent in pieces from its inmost foundations. But every where the fertility of the place was wonderful, and with but ordinary skill, and the efforts of an industrious people, the whole Island might be rendered a perfect garden. We observed large tracts which were totally uncultivated,

tivated, and even where the hand of art and labour had been exercised, vast quantities of broken rocks and pumice stones are scattered about, which may probably have remained there since the period of the last eruption.

We did not arrive at Oratava till two in the morning. The people of the house, to which our Mulateers intended to conduct us, refused us admittance. Notwithstanding our fatigue, we were compelled to proceed, almost the space of another mile, over a rough pavement, and up a steep ascent, before we could obtain a lodging, which was not at last accomplished without difficulty. Our ignorance of the language was an inconvenience almost invincible; but after rehearsing a short pantomime, we contrived to get a few eggs, a glass of wine, and a mat to sleep on. We had with us bundles of warm apparel, that we might be the better able to encounter the inclement winds of the Peak, and these served for our pillows. We were assailed by every species of vermin, but our fatigue nevertheless enabled us to sleep soundly till day-light. We then rose to behold and bear a part in a scene truly comic. The house was very soon assembled around us. We each and all of us spoke long and aloud, without once remembering that we were mutually unintelligible to each other. Our voices were seconded by gestures, till, as if by one consent, becoming sensible of the absurdity, a perfect silence of some minutes ensued. The master of the house then went

out, but speedily returned with an old Spanish foldier, who had been for some time a prifoner in England, and was tolerably acquainted with our language. The landlord was, by his affiftance, informed of our intended expedition to the Peak; and of our wifhes, that he would immediately procure us mules and guides for this purpofe. He, without hesitation, pronounced the project to be abfolutely impracticable. He was certain, he informed us, that at this feafon of the year no guides would undertake to accompany us; that many of the Mountaineers, who had gone in fearch of their goats to the fskirts of the plains, and thefe are feven or eight miles diftant from the Peak, had perifhed from the intenfenefs of the cold. Some alfo, he added, who had perfevered in an attempt like ours, had never more returned. Such were the arguments ufed by our hof and his family to induce us to relinquifh our fcheme, and indeed all of them appeared to take a friendly intereft about us. Finding, however, that our refolutions were fixed on the Journey, they promifed to exert themfelves in procuring for us proper guides. Some hours paffed away without our gaining intelligence of any, but two ftout peafants at length made their appearance, and offered to accompany us as far as the plain; *but* they treated with fcorn, and as a thing impoffible, our idea of afcending to the fummit of the Peak. As their coarfe familiarity and ruftic wit did not feem quite agreeable to us, they affumed at laft a graver tone, and ferioufly told us, that if it were even poffible to arrive at the Peak, we could not
avoid

avoid perishing when there: they expressed themselves so significantly by signs and gestures, that we perfectly understood them even before our old soldier had more fully explained their meaning. We then assured them, that if we found it unsafe or imprudent to advance beyond the plain, we would certainly return. To this our interpreter immediately replied—If you do not, they will make no scruple of leaving you: it is, I assure you, by no means uncommon for strangers to lose their lives in this place by their own obstinacy. He then related an accident, which happened at a more favourable season of the year to two young men, who, being abandoned by their guides, were found, some days afterwards, almost exhausted from want of food, after having been obliged to drink their urine to allay their excessive thirst. We desired our soldier to make an agreement for us with these peasants, to conduct us as far as they possibly could, promising to pay them well, and to recompense him also for his care and trouble. He accordingly engaged them to attend with their mules on the morrow, the present day being too far spent. They were to be ready to proceed at any hour when we might choose to go; and were to conduct, and bring us back to Oratava for eight dollars; we engaged to maintain them and their cattle, and we parted very well satisfied with each other. The old soldier settled the necessary articles of provision to be carried with us, which consisted of two or three salt fish, two dozen of hard eggs, one dozen of small loaves, and two gallons

gallons of wine in a keg. When we mentioned water, they affirmed it to be unnecessary, but in this respect we afterwards found they were mistaken.

At mid-day the family gave us to understand it was the time of dinner. They immediately placed before us salt-fish, dressed after their fashion, with rancid oil. We were kindly relieved from all appearance of ceremony, by their helping themselves with their fingers from our dish; neither did they fail to praise our wine, which they drank with hearty good will. They assured us there was no better in Oratava, and they used it as if they really thought so. I had forgot to mention, that to this family there belonged no small number of children. Whilst we were at dinner, the youngest of these was sprawling on the floor; unluckily for us, it had a call of nature, but this circumstance was by no means allowed to interrupt or suspend our family meal. When the crisis was over, some dogs were called in, who, with the assistance of part of the family, soon removed what was offensive to our delicacy. Dogs are very numerous in this place; and from the specimen which I have given, it should seem that they were instructed not to be altogether useless in some parts of the œconomy of a nursery.

After the above regale of our different senses in the house, we proceeded to take a survey of the town. Oratava is situated on the side of
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a rugged hill, which slopes gradually to the sea. It commands the view of a fine bay, convenient for ships which have but a small draught of water, and in this place, accordingly, merchantmen of this description usually anchor. Besides the local advantages, they have here also other inducements, as wine, fruits, and vegetables are got on board at the Port of Oratava at a more reasonable rate than at Santa Cruz. This, indeed, is the most fertile side of the Island, and in a great measure supplies all the rest. Nothing can be either more beautiful or more romantic than this charming place.—The houses, it must be confessed, are low, but they are remarkably neat, and of white stone. The streets must not be passed over without their proper share of praise—On one side they have a channel for a copious spring of the clearest and sweetest water, which, in its passage over a rugged kind of pavement, murmurs most agreeably along. Every surrounding valley is a vineyard, watered by innumerable streams. Hills above hills, crowned with woods, elevate themselves to the clouds; and the stupendous Peak towering above the whole, renders the great mass of view most sublimely interesting. About four in the afternoon, our curiosity was attracted by the performance of some Roman Catholic ceremonies—An immense crowd of people followed certain images of our Saviour and St. Peter; these were placed on thrones, which were decorated with very beautiful artificial flowers, and surrounded by all the religious of the place. At every house of worship they halted;

here

here they waved their censers, and sung anthems, after which they again proceeded. The attention of the people was frequently directed to the appearance of two strangers among them, and we could observe ourselves to be the objects of curiosity and conversation. The Governor also was pleased to notice us; for when the ceremony of the procession ended, and the people were dispersed, a Gentleman addressed us, as we were returning home, in good English, and desired us, in polite terms, to accompany him to the Governor's house. We did not refuse his invitation, and were soon introduced to his Excellency, his son, and several officers. They received us with much appearance of friendship, and in the course of conversation enquired the object of our excursion. We answered that it was our desire to visit the Peak, and that early the next morning we intended to proceed, with the hope that our efforts would be successful. The Governor, in reply, entreated us to lay aside our intentions; and indeed the whole company, without a single exception, avowed a similar opinion.—They assured us one and all, that such a thing had never been done at this season of the year, and that some who had set out with these intentions, had perished in the attempt. Finding, however, that they were unable to dissuade us from our purpose, they kindly recommended us closely to follow our conductors. The Peasants, they said, who offer themselves as guides, live in the vicinity of the Peak, and obtain their livelihood principally from the ice, which, at proper periods, they bring down from a vast cavern at the distance

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of two miles from the summit: this consequently enabled them to decide both at what time, and how far they might venture. They added, that if we were even able to converse with them readily in their own language, they would not stay a moment to reason with us, but would abruptly leave us if we attempted to advance a step further than they deemed practicable. We returned them our thanks for their kindness, and determined to adhere as closely to their advice as was consistent with our purposes. The hours had glided imperceptibly away in this most agreeable company, and finding it was late, we rose to take our leave. They pressed us to remain where we were, but we excused ourselves, promising to visit them on our return. The Governor then gave each of us his hand, saying, that this he knew to be the English fashion, and that all there were the friends of Englishmen. The whole company, first placing their hands upon their breasts, followed his example. The Gentleman, who had first addressed us in English, and who proved to be a Physician, offered, as we were strangers, to attend us home; as did also the Governor's son, but this we would by no means allow. Our landlord waited for us at the door. We entered the house, where the family were assembled, and expecting us to supper. We soon experienced a difference in their behaviour, and could not help observing to one another, that for this increase of kindness and attention we were indebted to my lord the Governor. We could not, without some difficulty, prevail on them to sup at the same time that

we did ; nor were they now guilty of the smallest impropriety. In the midst of our repast, the Governor's son entered with his friend.—They told us, they were come once more to see us, and request the honour of our names. This being granted, the Physician, who appeared to have visited our English Universities, entered them in a kind of memorandum book. At the same time, he begged leave to express his regret at not possessing sufficient influence to dissuade us from an expedition, in which there was much certain peril, but little or indeed no probability of success. They then proceeded to render us the last kind office in their power :—They sent for our guides, who were sleeping among the litter with their mules, and solemnly enjoined them to pay us the most careful attention. We were not backward in expressing our gratitude for their kindness, and once more bade them adieu. When supper was ended, the mats were produced ; the family retired, and left us to our repose. A circumstance now happened, which occasioned some mirth in the honest family—A maid servant, who brought each of us, as an additional article of luxury, a dirty pillow, and was about to place them under our heads, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, on seeing us place these pillows, whose complexion we distrusted, beneath our feet. She did not scruple to alarm the family, who, from the adjoining room where they all kennelled together, were repeatedly calling out to her : but as from her excessive mirth she was unable to articulate, their curiosity soon brought them in their shirts and shifts to see

see what was the matter. After some time contemplating the posture in which we reclined, and with no appearance of dissatisfaction, they left us to our reflections and repose. A sound sleep imperceptibly stole upon us—We awoke a short time before the hour we had fixed on for our departure, for which we anxiously prepared. The Muleteers and their beasts were, ere long, assembled at the gate, and roused the family. All of them seemed anxious to shew us kindness and attention, and without great difficulty adjusted our baggage. We then directed our guides to mount, not choosing ourselves to ride through the town over a rugged pavement, and upon a brace of panniers. On taking leave, our host and his family shewed us every mark of goodwill—He seized our hands, clasped them to his bosom, and offered up for us a fervent prayer, in which the whole family joined with uplifted eyes, and with their hands crossed over their breasts. We expressed our thanks as well as we were able, and eagerly followed our conductors.

We were somewhat more than two miles from the town when the day broke, and exhibited to us very different scenes:—steep rugged precipices, wide yawning gulphs, and huge pendent rocks, threatening destruction to the traveller, presented themselves to our view. No vegetables occurred to relieve the eye, better or more lively than fern, heath, and Spanish broom. The guides, as we proceeded, frequently

made an offer of their beasts, but this we refused constantly to accept, as we did not wish to give them any excuse for fatigue. Fortunate, perhaps, it was that we did so, for the time-worn saddles, on which they rode, would certainly have disabled us from proceeding farther than the Plains. The exertion also of walking kept us temperately warm, which, as every thing was congealed around us, now became necessary. About ten o'clock we entered these Plains, where so many travellers have lost their lives. Here we made a short pause, to contemplate the Peak in its sublimest point of view. The Plains surrounding it were covered with lava, and it is to be remarked that these Plains extended from seven to ten miles. With this lava were interspersed huge fragments of rock, which had evidently been hurled from the summit of the Peak. One of these rocks we measured, and we found its circumference betwixt sixty and seventy feet. In its form it was nearly globular. Some of them had the appearance of chimneys encrusted with smoke, others were black and shining as jet. Some of the rocks were entire, but most of them broken by the fall, and the separate parts projected at a considerable distance from each other. We selected some small pieces which were sparred off, these we found to contain much inflammable matter, and to be as hard as flint. The portions of rock, which had been projected to the greatest distance from the Peak, were, according to our calculation, from seven to eight miles.

Beneath

Beneath one of these rocks we halted, to give some provender to our cattle, and to take some refreshment ourselves. At this place our guides discovered some inclination to return—They pointed to the clouds, and intimated that these would rise and overwhelm us with snow. On our producing a pocket compass, and explaining to them, as well as we could, its use, they appeared to be better satisfied: they mounted their mules, and trotted onwards with seeming unconcern.

Immediately upon our entrance to these plains, we experienced a sudden transition from cold to heat, and suffered no small inconvenience from a difficulty of breathing. I could not help observing to Mr. Burton, that I did not conceive this oppression on our lungs to be occasioned from the height we had ascended, or from the rarefaction of the air, to which such sensations have commonly been imputed: but perceiving that my shoes were covered with a kind of yellow dust, and feeling my eyes and nose disagreeably affected with a tingling, and in some degree painful sensation, it immediately occurred to me, that this must proceed from the sulphureous particles, which, continually ascending, were drawn in with our respiration, and occasioned the shortness of breath, of which we mutually complained.

To be the more assured, I washed my mouth with wine, some of which I also snuffed up my nostrils; a slight pain in my temples, with
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all the disagreeable feelings I have mentioned above, were instantly removed, though but for a short interval. Mr. Burton followed my example, and with the same effects. Soon afterwards, having occasion to use my pocket handkerchief, which was of white callico, I perceived that it smelt like a match; I unfolded it, and observed that the sulphur had penetrated through every fold. At noon, we arrived at the first flight of rocks; in approaching these, the division, which is about midway, and which is occasioned by the recess of the second flight of rocks, is not perceptible. Above these is the Sugar Loaf, which, with respect to its height when viewed from the plains, greatly deceives the traveller. Before we gained these rocks, we found no small difficulty in ascending a steep, which was covered with fragments of lava and large pumice stones; these were continually giving way beneath our feet. This first flight of rocks is called The Englishman's Resting Place, —Estancia de los Ingleses. This is reckoned a day's journey from Oratava, and here travellers always pitch their tents. That this should be called The Englishman's Resting Place, is, in a high degree, complimentary to our Nation. We may conclude from it, that the visitors, who have had curiosity and perseverance enough to accomplish this journey, have been principally Englishmen; for as to the Spaniards, it is notorious that such undertakings never enter into their heads. We fastened our mules at the foot of these rocks, and would have changed our shoes, which were nearly worn out: to this our guides seemed so exceedingly

exceedingly averſe, that imagining they had good reaſons for their pertinacity, we, though with ſome reluctance, deſiſted. After taking ſome reſreſhment, we proceeded to labour up the ſteep, reſting at ſeveral intervals as we advanced. We at length arrived at the receſs I have before mentioned, and were beyond meaſure diſappointed at perceiving another height of rocks, as difficult of aſcent as thoſe which we had already ſurmounded. We had imagined that we had ſimply the Sugar Loaf to aſcend, which, at a diſtance, ſeemed to be no very arduous undertaking. To increaſe our chagrin, we found that our guides had deceived us with reſpect to our ſhoes; they were now ſo worn, that our feet appeared through them, and every ſtep we took was attended with pain. Our guides only laughed at our diſtreſs, and conducted us to the cavern of ice. Here we ſat down to reflect upon our ſituation. This was unpleaſant enough; we were in the miſt of a precipice formed by large rocks, heaped upon one another, and all of them ſo diſuniting, that if we were to make but one falſe ſtep, a fall betwixt them would be inevitable, and the conſequence a fracture of ſome limb, if not loſs of life itſelf. Having ſufficiently reſted ourſelves, we were anxious to proceed, but our guides ſeemed now determined to advance no further. They pointed to the top, blew their fingers, drew themſelves into a heap; then ſtretched themſelves along the rock, as if to intimate that inevitable death would be the conſequence of our indiſcretion and audacity. We laughed at this idea,

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and made a motion as if we were about to proceed ; they then informed us by signs that they would stay for us in the cavern, but they did this in such a manner, that we were thoroughly convinced it was their intention here to leave us to our fate. Of this, indeed, the Governor and our other friends had forewarned us. We were so displeased with their insincerity, that we could not forbear having recourse to menaces. I hastily drew a small hanger, which was luckily by my side, the sight of which had an instantaneous and wonderful effect. Both of them in a moment started up, and advanced briskly before us—I called loudly to them to stop, and placing myself behind the foremost peasant, and my companion following the other, we thus made sure of our guides. After frequently resting ourselves, and with many fatiguing efforts, we at length gained the summit of the second flight of rocks. From hence we had a view of the Sugar Loaf, which we had not once seen since our quitting the plains. Much were we surprised to find that our conductors were far less able to endure the fatigue than ourselves ; yet part of our feet were entirely bare, whilst theirs was effectually secured against the sharp rocks by raw bulls hides, sewed to the soles of their shoes, and projecting an inch beyond them. This is a precaution which they, who have to travel from curiosity or necessity over steep and rugged ways, would do well to have in remembrance. Nevertheless our guides were always the first to call out for rest. Whilst we were ascending these rocks,

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we experienced none of those disagreeable sensations, of which we had occasion to complain in the plains below : a convincing proof, that our sufferings there, were caused also by the sulphureous particles of dust. The wind blew very cold in sudden squalls, yet we often found our great coats an incumbrance, when sheltered by the intervening rocks. After a long rest, we again pressed forwards with renewed ardour ; we saw ourselves not very far from our journey's end, and with no very great seeming difficulties to encounter. But no sooner had we left the rocks, than we sunk knee-deep into lava ; a most violent and piercing wind assailed us, and we were compelled for security, to plunge our arms into the lava also : In this manner, with many retrograde motions, we persevered in our endeavours to ascend.—Sometimes, after struggling for many minutes to gain a few feet, we found ourselves in an instant precipitated down with a mass of rubbish, and almost suffocated with the dust. In one of these efforts, to our great distress and concern, our younger guide fainted away. We immediately approached, and placed him in a sitting posture. But we were not a little alarmed to see that his head reclined, as if void of all sensation, on his shoulders ; his eyes were fixed and sunk, his nostrils distended, his tongue swollen, and hanging out of his mouth, so that to our apprehension, his moment of dissolution could not be very remote. We were able to afford him no other relief, than by keeping his head in the direction of the wind. As soon as he discovered some symptoms of returning

fense, we pointed to the rocks from which we last departed; we intimated our wish, that he should endeavour to return, and there shelter himself from the winds which blew with extreme sharpness, and from the sulphureous dust which materially obstructed our respiration. He was seemingly too weak to adhere to our advice.—The elder guide, who had helped us in assisting his companion, now quitted him, and began to scramble upwards.—Seeing this, we also left him; but as soon as we had arrived at a resting place and looked back, we had the satisfaction to see him, tho' slowly, and with difficulty, making his way to the rocks we had pointed out to him. It was about half past two, when we entered a fissure between the rocks, which had not improbably been occasioned by the descent of a torrent of lava. We next descended into the Crater, although we were almost suffocated with the volumes of smoke which burst forth from various parts of it. Our guide turned over many large calcined stones, and pointed out to our attention different specimens of sulphur, which appeared in a boiling, bubbling state. In one place, I sat down to select some of the pieces of sulphur, preferring this to the attitude of bending over it; but a sudden and violent numbness seized my side nearest the ground. In a moment I started up, and rushed to the summit of the Peak. The cold was now so extremely sharp and piercing, that it absolutely drew blood from my pores, but I no longer felt that difficulty of breathing, which from the time of our quitting the rocks we had experienced, and

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more particularly whilst we continued in the Crater. I called to Mr. Burton, who instantly followed me, and as speedily experienced the same relief.

We had now to our great satisfaction, accomplished the object of our hopes.—We stood on the summit of the Peak of Teneriffe, and at an altitude tremendous to the imagination. I have before acknowledged, that I was without any Philosophical apparatus; but as the Reader, whose curiosity has not been directed before to this vast prodigy of Nature, would wish probably to have some more particular information concerning it, I cannot do better than insert here an Extract, from a work of the celebrated Traveller Mr. Cox, wherein this subject is investigated.

“ According to Father Kircher, who took the elevations of mountains by the uncertain methods of measuring their shadows,

	TOISES.	ENGLISH FEET.
Ætna is - - -	4,000	25,600
The Peak of Teneriffe -	10,000	64,000
Mount Athos - -	20,000	128,000
Lariffa in Egypt -	28,000	179,200

But these calculations are evidently so extravagant, that their exaggeration must strike the most common observer. If we consult more modern and rational accounts, it appears, that the Peak of Teneriffe and *Ætna*, have been frequently supposed to be the highest points of the Globe. The former is estimated by some Natural Philosophers, to be 3000 toises, or 19,200 feet above the level of the sea; but, according to Feuillé, this elevation is reduced to 2,070 toises, or 13,248 feet. Whereas *Ætna*, by the accurate computations of Mr. de Sauffure, rises only 1672 toises, or 10,700 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the sea. Hence it will appear, that there are no mountains, except those in America, the elevation whereof according to Condamine, surpasses 3,000 toises, or 19,200 feet, which are equal to the altitude of Mont Blanc.

In order, however, to determine with absolute certainty that Mont Blanc is the highest point of the known World, it would be necessary to estimate by the same mode of mensuration, Mont Blanc, the Schrek-horn, the Peak of Teneriffe, the Mountains of the Moon, in Africa, the Taurus, and the Caucasus."

Thus much with respect to the altitude of the Peak of Teneriffe, from whence some idea may be formed of the ardour and perseverance which were necessary to proceed through all the difficulties and inconveniencies which I have but in part enumerated, to its extreme vertex.

vertex. In the circumference of this vertex we remained for the space of an hour and a half, collecting different specimens of brimstone, a variety of calcined stones, with some nitre also of the finest quality; though at intervals we found it expedient, and indeed necessary, to run to the top itself for refreshment. These articles, which must be objects of curiosity to the Naturalist, with many others which I gathered in the Peak, have been deposited in the Museum of Mr. Parkinson. This Gentleman has properly marked and regularly arranged them, and in this place whoever may be so disposed, has an easy opportunity of examining them.

The Crater is nearly circular, its depth is from forty to fifty paces; its diameter at the top, is from seventy to an hundred paces. It is surrounded by steep and rugged rocks—its surface at the bottom is entirely covered with nitre. When this nitre is removed, brimstone is discovered. The bottom is full of cracks and fissures, from whence, if you run a stick into them, issues a column of smoke. It was so hot, that we were obliged continually to be moving our feet, or they would have certainly been burned; and the rumbling, bubbling noise, which assailed our ears, I can compare to nothing but the sound of an immense boiling cauldron.

Looking

Looking round, we perceived that our guide was fallen a-sleep in a chasm in the rocks, and we found it a matter of no small difficulty to rouse him.

As our curiosity was now fully satisfied, we once more ascended the summit, as well for refreshment, as to take a farewell view. We beheld the grand Canary, appearing as a part of Teneriffe, but the prospect of the other Islands was totally intercepted by clouds. We descended from the Sugar Loaf with extraordinary rapidity—We found our younger guide reclining beneath the shelter of the rocks, but still in a very debilitated state. During our absence, he had suffered very severely from a Diarrhœa, and frequent fits of vomiting. In our progress downwards, we were often obliged to have recourse to the snow to satisfy an extreme thirst which tormented us ; and never could the Sancho of Cervantes experience a more lively emotion of pleasure at beholding his long lost Afs, than we did at the sight of our Mules. We were no great while in disburdening them of their panniers of provision, the wine too was alike necessary and acceptable, and we made a most delicious repast.

Near this spot, Mr. Burton found two roots of Violets—The flower, in all respects, resembled that of the common hedge Violet, but the leaf was very different ; indeed, not like any we had ever seen. Above
this

this spot I neglected to observe, we could discern no marks of vegetation.

From this Resting Place we thought it adviseable to make the best of our way homewards, which we proceeded to do with renewed energy, and with no small exultation. It was night, and very dark, when we reached the verge of the Plain. I before remarked, that our journey here was in its commencement difficult, it was now not only difficult but very dangerous. We did not reach Oratava till half past eleven o'clock. Yet, at this late hour, many of the neighbours left their dwellings to meet us ; and it was evident, that from their mode of expressing their astonishment and admiration, that they considered us as very extraordinary Beings.

Our landlord and his family, with eager kindness, advanced to salute us.—The mistress of the house made haste to heat some water, in which she steeped many odoriferous herbs. She insisted upon bathing and washing our feet herself. A good supper was soon provided, after which mattresses, with clean sheets, made the night in all respects very comfortable.

In the morning we were awakened by the noise of many voices, and it was not long before our apartment was filled with many faces, which
were

(32)
were altogether strange to us. A circle was suddenly formed, in which the elder Mulateer was giving, as we imagined, his account of the transactions of the preceding day. His audience discovered the most eager and attentive curiosity, and from time to time did not fail to regard us with countenances, which expressed complacency and approbation. We desired our mules to be got ready, and sat down to a chearful breakfast. Whilst we were eating this, our levee encreased and our old friend the foldier entered, among many others. He expressed great satisfaction at our safe return, and we perhaps on our parts should have received him with a more cordial welcome, but that the house now became heated to excess.

We sent after we had breakfasted to the younger guide, who came to us immediately. He had a napkin bound round his head, and complained of being yet very ill. Our next concern was to settle with our landlord, but he was exceedingly averse to accept any thing, and in the most friendly terms expressed much uneasiness at our leaving him so soon. He desired our kind interpreter the foldier, to inform us, that it would afford him the sincerest satisfaction, to be able once more to see us in the course of his life.

As we were about to leave the town, we thought it incumbent upon us to call and pay our respects to the Governor and his family ; but, as
they

they were not yet stirring, and we had no time to lose, we wrote our names on a piece of paper, signifying that we had called to take leave. We then continued our route—As often as we met any fellow travellers, our guides did not fail to inform them, that we were returned from visiting the Peak, a conversation concerning which immediately took place.

As we passed through a small village, at the distance of a few miles from Oratava, some Peasants having heard our story, circulated it abroad ; the consequence of which was, that in a very short time we were surrounded by a great number of the Natives. They carried branches of the Bay-tree in their hands, they waved them as if in triumph in the air ; then making a passage for us through the midst of the crowd, they strewed them under our feet.

We arrived without accident at Santa Cruz, at an early hour in the evening, when it was already too dark for us to be perceived or known. Our younger guide here left us, and we had reason from the weakness of his voice to conclude, that he was seriously ill. The elder Muleteer conducted us to the house of Mr. R — y. He was absent from home, but his Clerk civilly took us into the office, and undertook to settle with the Muleteer, and pay him the sum for which we had made agreement. I had all along intended to make some addi-

tion to this, if he should appear to express himself satisfied with the sum he had first required. I was much delighted with the specimen he exhibited of simple native goodness, for when the Clerk offered him the money and informed him, that it was for the Gentleman whom he had attended, he put it immediately into his pocket without counting it. He then in a most respectful manner advanced and embraced us both, whilst tears of affection and gratitude stole down his cheeks, and the liveliest satisfaction was visible in the whole of his demeanour.

Thus successfully ended our excursion:—an excursion, the memory of which will always affect me with the most agreeable sensations. I am well aware, that my Narrative will afford but scanty matter of amusement to those, who look for abstruse remarks, the result of Philosophical Observation. For this defect, I have already made all the apology which can be reasonably expected from a Professional Man, like myself. I shall be sufficiently gratified, and indeed perfectly justified to myself, if the preceding Pages shall receive that degree of respect to which a Journal is entitled, which communicates without any pretensions to embellishment or elegance, the plain and simple truth.

CULWORTH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

FINIS.

